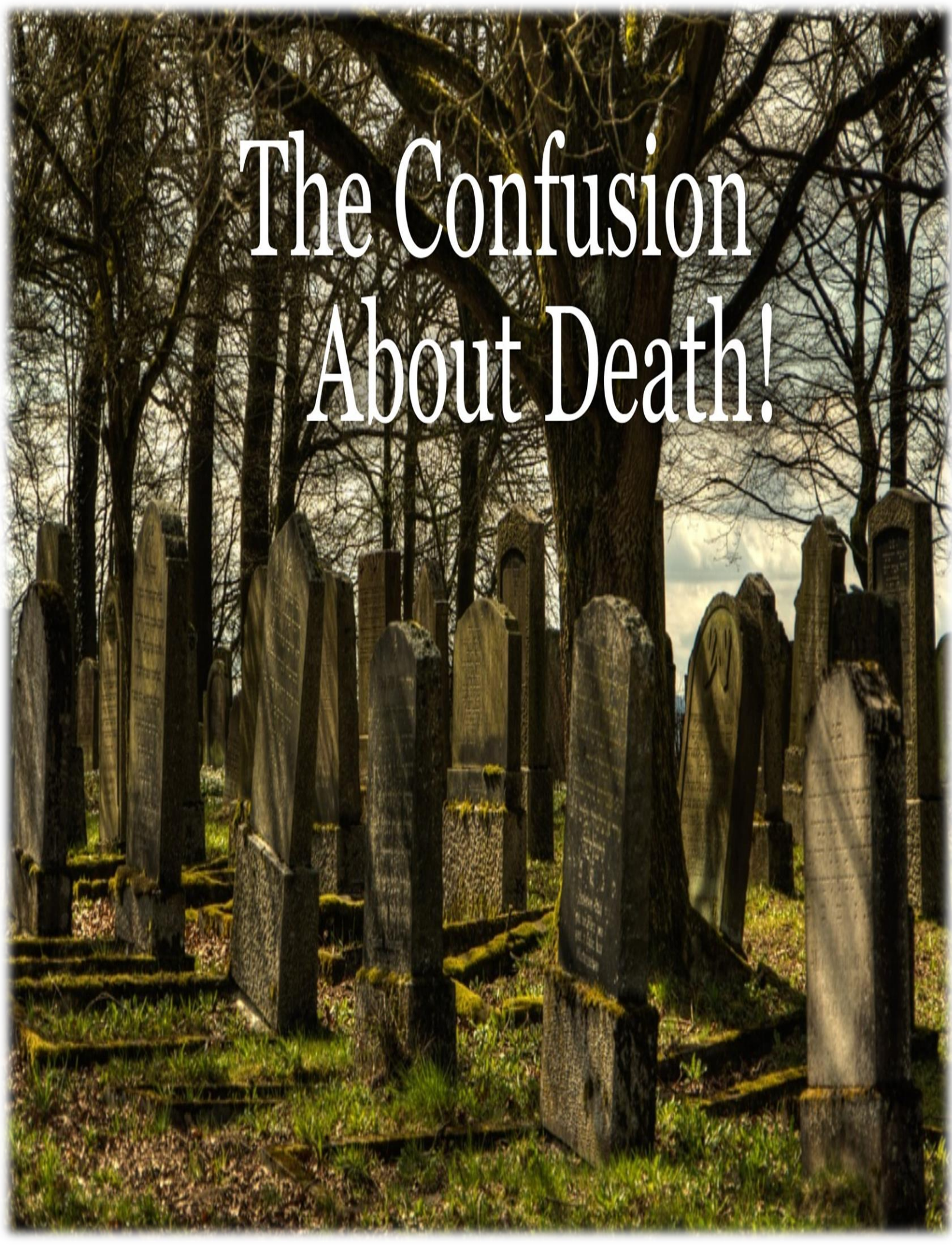


The Confusion About Death!



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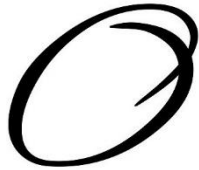
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[Owensboro Church of Jesus Christ](#)

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What is death? What will happen AFTER death? There is grave confusion which exists in our culture concerning death and in particular the fate of the dead. It's a complex web of conflicting religious dogma that leads to a whole plethora of thoughts, teachings, and beliefs. Here are the answers to many of your questions from God's divine Word – the Holy Bible!



n the 13th of March, just a couple of weeks ago, I was given the delicate task of speaking at my aunt's funeral. Now this aunt was my father's only sibling, she was eighty-nine years old and seven months. She had a good life. She went downhill real quick, doctor's don't even know really why she died. It just happened. And, I would suggest to most people that accepting such an invitation is a risky proposition! Because, you have in the crowd all of your family, and if you say something that they don't like, or you infer something they don't agree with, you can really ruffle some feathers. You might not be back at Thanksgiving Day dinner for a while! And, I was shocked when I was asked to do this, because I was not close to this woman. I knew her. Quite frankly she was hard to get along with. She was the exact opposite of my Dad. My Dad, her older brother, is as sweet and gentle, kind and patient as any human being you would ever want to find. But, his sister, just polar opposites. She was cantankerous, she was controversial, she was confrontational, and it was real difficult to come up with a message – I had to do a lot of thinking on this one. And in the crowd was Baptists, and Methodists, and Catholics, and at least one Atheist that I know of – he was my brother-in-law. But, anyway, who knows how many different selections were out there. I did have an attempt to review her life and to try and capture the essence of her and her life. Both the desirable and the undesirable. At one point I had a line that said, "Aunt Nellie was an independent woman. Proudly so. And sometimes stridently so!" And I said, "She could be a puzzle, a conundrum, an enigma." And every head in the crowd was nodding. Her own son said, "She's been mad at me for fifteen years!" So, she was one to hold a grudge a long time.

But, anyway, Mr. [Ted Armstrong](#) would have been proud! I was able to get the song, *My Way*, into a sermon presentation. Because as I was preparing the notes, this song just kept – "My Way, And I did it my way!" And I thought, "Boy that sounds like Aunt Nellie!" So I looked up the words on the computer, and boy it just fit her to a T!

So I read them about 2/3 through the sermon presentation. And everyone in the crowd, once again, began nodding their heads. And I tried to present the concept of death as *sleep*. Now remember, you get such a crowd, and maybe if you threw in a Buddhist or something you might get all types of ideas about what happens AFTER death. What really struck me once again, is when you go into those settings you literally – as the speaker; the focus of attention – you have in the palm of your hand the feelings and the emotions and the sense of happiness and fulfillment, or great frustration, of the people who are in that room shedding tears. And the ones that were effected most were her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren. We had a little break before the service actually began, and there

was a little guy – one of her grandchildren – I’m guessing about eight or nine years old, and he was just bawling his head off. And I thought – it just struck me once again – “Mike, you have to be so careful what you say and what you do today.” Because peoples outlook on life will be greatly affected. “If you really mess this up, you’re gonna hurt people for a long time.” And to still tell the Truth of God, it’s not an easy task to perform. But everyone seemed to appreciate the effort and I have not received any death threats, so I think I got through it! Once again, my family members, my brother and my sister, my nieces, are just utterly shocked when they see me in that setting. Because they’re just not totally use to seeing me in that way. Normally when they see me I’ve got a baseball hat on a t-shirt and shorts. And then all of sudden to be in that setting and talking about eternity and God, it just catches them off guard. Because we don’t normally talk about that at a family dinner.

The Great Confusion

Well, collecting my thoughts, and preparing my notes, once again gave me the opportunity to ponder *the great confusion* – the confusion which exists in our culture concerning death and in particular the fate of the dead. It’s a complex web of conflicting religious dogma that leads to a whole plethora of thoughts, teachings, and beliefs, which *each group* thinking they’re right and *each group* thinking everybody else is wrong! I mean, the Baptists think they’re the only ones that knows the truth, and Methodists, too. Catholics believe they’re the only church. You know, *each group*. The Pentecostals think they’ve got it right.

And, think about it! Even within the structure of the Church of God, the many descendants of the Worldwide Church of God. Think about how many of those groups actually have the audacity to believe and to teach that *they* and *their religious leader* is the *only* person who now can relay the truth from God to the people. You know that to be true. I won’t name the names, but you know they’re out there! Thankfully I don’t believe that is *our* outlook. I know in many of those groups, I have brothers and sisters that... we’re just not gonna talk for a while. But hopefully sometime out there we will! And yet, some of these people – especially the leaders – go so beyond anything that is rational, that you have to believe that some of them attempt to present themselves as being the great High Priest that stands between God and mankind. And the last time I read the Book of Hebrews, that title belongs to Jesus Christ! And to presume *that* title or *that* duty I think is a blasphemous thing to do! But again, I’m not their Judge, and they probably should be thankful for that! Because I have a difficult time appreciating the troubles that many church people out there and other organizations have to go through just to satisfy their egomania – and that’s what it is, a form of madness. The egomania that resides in some of those leaders.

Well, many people just don’t know what to think. You know, you’re average person on the street – most of my family members; if I was to walk up to my brother, my sister, and say, “What do you think about the fate of the dead, or the future of the dead!?” They could not give you a solidified, codified, idea about what they actually believe. Because they DON’T believe! Because they don’t know *what* to believe! They’re just in a state of ignorance.

And that's not a dirty word. Ignorance just means lacking knowledge, or unaware. In a state of unknowledge.

Well, today's message is a presentation which discusses and examines some of the following issues: 1) Death and dying. 2) The state of the dead. 3) The ultimate fate of the dead. What is going to happen to them!?

Every time I think about a death and a funeral, I think about **Hebrews chapter 2, verse 15** – when he said, “and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” And that describes so many people!

They're just in fear. They don't know what death *is* – because in the back of their mind, they have all these stories that they've heard in Sunday school, or from their fire-breathing preacher – and there's a lot of agony that's created by that! Even a young child will wonder, “Well, who am I!?” And, “Where did I come from!?” And, “Where am I going!?” What will become of me somewhere down the road!?” And the older we become the more we ask ourselves, I believe, “What is going to happen to me when I die!?” And the older we get I think the more we become aware of our temporary status upon this earth and our approaching mortality. Not a pleasant thought, but, it is reality. You know, Paul said ‘it was given to all mankind to die ONCE.’ And unless we're in that generation where Jesus Christ returns, the fact that we were born ensures that someday we will die. Again, these are not real pleasant – maybe that's why I wore a red tie to brighten things up a bit!?

Because, it's sort-of morbid. You know much of the fear and the controversy which drifts through society stems from the teachings of so-called mainstream nominal Christianity. They talk about *the soul*. “Having a soul.” They talk about *the immortality of the soul*. And “having an immortal soul.” They talk about “*I's goin' to Heaven!*” as [Billy Graham](#) would say in that North Carolina accent! Or, and this is the favorite of the Pentecostals and the Baptists – “*Goin' to Hell!*” They like that one! Why, I don't know. Because they think they're not going and everyone else is! Because, “you see that's what they deserve, because they didn't come and join us!” And then *the 'lake of fire.'* Every so often you hear people throw in the ‘lake of fire,’ and it gets confused with everything. And then, *the 'Kingdom of God.'* I think is what we would like to think about!

However, true Believers, and true practitioners, must know what definitive authoritarian source upon which they can go, that they can rely, to form their opinions on these things. And before you even get to say:

- Where do I go?
- What book do I go to?
- What reference book do I read?

I think there's a series of questions you have to ask yourself. And everyone reading this at one time or another has asked yourself these questions. And it's basic logic. The questions you have to ask yourself:

1. Is there a God? Or, is there not a God?

Basic question. Now, if there is no God, you might as well be *like* Paul – 1st Corinthians chapter 15 – and he was quoting from the Old Testament, “Eat, drink, and be merry, because tomorrow we die.” Or, as my atheistic-leaning brother-in-law once said, “Well, when I die, they’re just gonna put me in a box, and I’m gonna rot!” And I thought, “Wow, what a great hope and expectation!” I’d love to go to bed every night thinking, “You’re just gonna be food for worms someday! That’s all you’re gonna be!” And I still shake my head every time I see Jim – especially in that setting the other day. In the final prayer I actually said, “And for *those of them* who don’t actually believe in You,” and I was referring to my brother-in-law, “at least allow these words to give them some sense of hope in case, perchance, You might exist.” You know, they can somehow, “Well, if there is, then what Mike said today sounds pretty good.” And, once you establish that there is a God, you have to ask the question:

2. Do we utilize the teachings of the Bible, or, are we just simply going to trust the traditions of human beings and human institutions?

And, most of you reading this realize that the majority of people have their understanding of religion - as what they learned in church. But, that’s as far as it goes! And if you ever have the opportunity – and I don’t suggest you seek it out, but if it comes to your door step – to ask people about where they get their ideas, or, if you challenge them on a thought or something they say, Heaven, Hell, all of this. And, it won’t take long before they will be totally overwhelmed, and most of them have said to me, putting their hand up, “Mike, I’m gonna go talk to my pastor. And I’ll come back and get back with ya.” And not a one of them ever has. And I think the pastor just said, “You stay away from that Mike Garrett! I know he doesn’t have much hair, but if you look under there they’ll be little nubbins of horns! Probably a tail swishing!” Because they claim, “He’s the Devil! Stay away from him!” So, it comes down to, “Is there a God?” And, again, if there is no God, this entire discussion is simply wasted time! So, all people, they need to go through this progression of thought – is there a God!? You know, David was inspired to write back in Psalm chapter 14, that “the *fool*,” and if you look up that word, it means the stupid, the wicked, the impious, maybe in our language, the thickheaded, the lug headed, “the fool has said in his heart, ‘there is no God.’” And yet there are people on this Earth right now who don’t believe in God.

And they certainly don’t believe in a Christian God. And isn’t it shocking that we live in a country upon who’s money is printed “In God We Trust,” and yet increasingly – at all levels of our society; not just the Church of God, but out there among mainstream Christianity – that to be labeled a “Christian” is actually going to hurt you! Harm you! That there are institutions and people that – more and more – are geared up to be angry, upset, dismissive, against people who have thoughts of the Bible and Christ, and God! And yet, if you’re carrying under your arm a Koran, and if you’re screaming “Allah Akbar!” in a market place, well, that’s a perfectly normal expression. “You know, we shouldn’t judge those people!” And it’s just literally, we’re talking about a world – that in my short

lifetime – that has turned upside down! Upside down! “They call good evil, and they call evil good. Sweet for sour and sour for sweet.” That’s what Isaiah was inspired to write.

the Great Rebellion of Lucifer

Satan’s desire was to enter Heaven! We can spend a lot of time reading Isaiah chapter 14 and Ezekiel chapter 28, where there’s a long description of Lucifer’s rebellion. His attitude, his state of mind is described. But it’s best summed up in **Verses 13-14 of Isaiah chapter 14** – “For you have said in your heart [this is what God said to Lucifer]: ‘I will ascend into Heaven, ...’” – that *was* Satan’s goal. And he’s ever since then – after that great rebellion - and now when mankind showed up on the earth – *that* has been his plan! Satan’s goal and desire was to set up residence in Heaven. And ever since he failed, he has attempted to deceive mankind with the notion, and the lie, “the Big Lie,” that the fate of mankind is to someday occupy Heaven. And the Bible says absolutely *nothing* concerning the concept that mankind’s destiny is to someday fly off to Heaven. In fact the Protestants have a little song – “I’ll fly away Oh Glo•ry I’ll fly away when I die Hal•lelu•jah by and by I’ll fly away” – and a lot of times when you see them sing it in concert, they’re out there sort-of moving their “wings” like their gonna fly away.

Their gonna fly off to Heaven. Well... keep exercising! And they think *that* is where their gonna live for all eternity – in Heaven! However the Bible is patently clear that one day in a future era of time that Heaven – the very throne of God; the very residence of God – will be ON THE EARTH! And the Bible is also equally clear that mankind’s fate – it’s future destiny – is to inherit for all eternity THE EARTH! What an irony!

Their trying to go off to Heaven, and they’re gonna find out that someday they’re right here on THE EARTH! I’ve often thought that when people come up at the “Great White Throne Judgment” - remember the [Kevin Costner](#) movie, *Field of Dreams*? A baseball, sort-of fantasy movie, and at one point the ghosts or whoever they are, were talking to him and they ask, “Where are we!? Is this Heaven!?” And Kevin Costner’s character says, “No, it’s Iowa!” And, I can well imagine the people who come up in the “Great White Throne Judgment” having lived their lives under the idea that they’re gonna go off to Heaven when they die, they’re gonna come up out of the ground, they’re gonna be with their family members, and they’re gonna look around and be so happy and thankful, and hugs and kisses. And then someone’s going to ask, “Where are we!? Are we in Heaven!?” And I hope one of them has enough sense to look around and says, “Uh, looks like East Texas to me!” Or, “It looks like Patoka, Indiana to me!” That’s what my Mom and Grandmother will do.

Well, the question was really sort-of asked, so profoundly, on the day that the Solomon’s Temple – dedicated to God; the Great Dedication – *actually took place on the Feast of Tabernacles, which is an interesting side note*. And King Solomon and his great speech asked the question: ‘But will God indeed dwell on the Earth!?’ Isn’t that a great question!? Well, the Bible is filled with these passages- that says, that someday God is literally going to reside on the Earth! Which is what I would like to say to all the people who believe they’re going off to Heaven. If you actually got there, it wouldn’t be very long before you

become very lonely. Because God the Father and Jesus Christ and the great host of God's angels are gonna be on the Earth! And, that's not really where you wanna go.

The Big Lie

Well, mankind's confusion over death and the fate of the dead began with the telling of what I call "the Big Lie." Now you turn on the television today you can see and hear a lot of big lies, but, this is the big lie that Lucifer – Satan – perpetrated upon mankind. If you would, go back to **Genesis chapter 2**. He says in **Verse 15** – "Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. **16**) And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; [except] **17**) but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'"

Now, that's what God told Adam. And I'm sure the message was passed on to Eve eventually. Notice **chapter 3** – the *serpent*. Mr. Ted Armstrong would often say that word sort-of has the origins of being the 'enchanted whisperer.' Think of some used car salesman – no offense to used car salesmen – but, sometimes some of their ilk have been known not to tell the truth. "Well it only has twenty-thousand miles." When in fact it has three-hundred and twenty-thousand, they just erased something. The 'enchanted whisperer' – **Verse 1** – "Now the [enchanted whisperer] was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?' **2**) And the woman said to the [enchanted whisperer], 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; **3**) but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" And here comes the Big Lie – **Verse 4** – "And the serpent [Satan the devil] said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. ...'" – and, you know, ever since then mankind sort-of believes that it's this immortal creature that's not going to die! And yet, if you turn over to **Genesis chapter 5, verse 5** we see "all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died." So, just as God said, 'If you go down this route apart from Me, the inevitable end will be death.'

Those "who hold back the truth."

Well, turn to the Book of **Romans chapter 1** – Paul had some things to say about the existence of God and how human beings conduct themselves. Starting in **verse 18** – "For the wrath of God [*will be revealed* – as this verse's tense should be] from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who [hold back] the truth in unrighteousness."

I remember one time I was out in Arizona, and I had a large number of citrus trees growing in my front yard. At one time I had thirty-five varieties of citrus. That's a lot of fruit! And I could literally eat fruit fresh off a tree, about ten months out of the year! It was very nice, and that was long ago, but, had a neighbor right next door, Manny Ramirez – nice guy! And, one day I was outside watering my citrus trees, and Manny came up to the concrete block fence and we started talking. And Manny had recently become a – sort-

of like a Deacon in a Catholic church, because they didn't have enough priests to cover all these different territories. Manny and people like him would actually be serving in this sort-of semi "priest" roles. And because of that Manny had to go to classes. And one day out of the blue – I didn't prompt this – Manny goes, "Well, you know the Sabbath is not Sunday." And I almost dropped my water hose, and I said, "Yeah, Manny, I know that! How do you know that!?"

"O' well I've learned it in my classes. You know, I've also learned that we Catholics simply changed it." And, I said, "Well, indeed Manny. I think that you have some correct information there!"

And, in their mind it was perfectly fine to change what God had ordained. And, it says here – "who [hold back] the truth." Here Manny, who was just a normal middle-class guy, he *knew* that the Sabbath wasn't Sunday. And yet he was told by his priests and his institution that he *had to go* to church on Sunday – that *that* was the right day. Well, Paul went on to write – **Verse 19** – "because what may be known of God is manifest [or obvious in them or to them], for God has shown *it* to them." **Verse 20** – "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they [the unbelieving] are without excuse, **21**) because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became [vain] in their [imagination and their traditions of their institutions], and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22**) Professing to be wise, they became fools." It says down in **Verse 28** – "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a [reprobate] mind, ..." - a mind which is simply worthless, no longer working correctly! And I love this chapter – this whole chapter!

Creation Without a Creator?

You know, back in Owensboro, Kentucky, you look up at night and you might be lucky to see a dozen stars. And two or three of them are probably planets, if the truth be known. But out in Arizona, you could go out to the countryside – what I call, 'up into the hills' – and it seemed like there were a million stars! They were so bright, you actually felt at times you could actually reach up and grab one! And it was just spectacular!

And I remember my brother one time, he came out to visit me, he flew out to Los Vegas, and I drove up to pick him up out of the airport. And he had never been to Los Vegas, and he had wanted to see a casino, just as a tourist. And so I took him to the – at that time was the hottest property in Vegas, Caesars Palace. And, we went in there and walked through the different gaming devices and people. Then he wanted to go downtown Vegas, and if you've ever been to Los Vegas the motels on the strip are big and fancy and shiny. But if you go to downtown Vegas, you get into the original type casinos. And their much more earthy – as it were. More urban - as it were. And, the high-rollers tend to go to the strip, and the common people tend to go downtown.

And he had seen that in movies and on television, he just wanted to see it, we went there. So after we played tourist, we got in the car and headed south, back to where I was living. And about two-hours down the road, he needed to – shall we say irrigate some of the local plants. I'm being polite. And so he wandered off and did his thing. And all of a sudden out of nowhere I heard him scream – I mean he let out a shout! And I thought, "O' no, a rattlesnake has found him! Or a scorpion!" I said, "What happened!?" He said, "I looked up!" And when he looked up he saw a sky that he had never seen before!

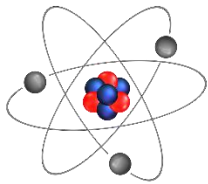
And these thousands upon thousands of stars – constellations. He was just shocked! And he said, "I've never seen this before!"



Well, as you read **Isaiah chapter 40, verse 12** – talking about God! “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, Measured heaven with a span And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance?” – to God everything that we know is pretty small. He goes on to say, **Verse 13** – “Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has taught Him? **14)** With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, And taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, And showed Him the way of understanding?”

Verse 15 – “Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, And are counted as the small dust on the scales; Look, He lifts up the [islands] as a very little thing. **16)** And Lebanon [that ancient force of Lebanon] is not sufficient to burn, Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering. **17)** All nations before Him are as nothing, And they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless. **18)** To WHOM then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare Him?” And he goes on to say **Verse 25** – “To WHOM then will you

liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal?’ **26)** Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things, WHO brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing. **27)** Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: ‘My way is hidden from the LORD, And my just claim is passed over by my God?’ **28)** Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. **29)** He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength.” And just the last verse there, such a *beautiful promise* – **Verse 31** – “But those who wait on the LORD [someday] Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.” That’s a promise of a future existence that we can look forward to!



David, in **Psalm chapter 8** was inspired to write, “when I considered Your heavens, the work of Your hands!” And David, too, as a young boy, out there in those hills tending the sheep, probably many a night laid back and just looked at the different stars and constellations and the comets and the meteorites, and the planets. Was just fascinated by it – too bad he didn’t have a telescope! He looked up and was just overwhelmed! How can *this* have accidentally happened!? And yet science would have you believe – it’s all just an accident! Just some strange coincidence. They would have you believe that sometime way back there, there was just this giant “thing.” This giant sort-of molecule. And it just erupted like a big old boil! And stuff went everywhere! They call it the “[Big Bang](#)” theory. That is *their* explanation as to where the heavens, the Earth, the universe came from. That’s pretty pathetic – I’m actually ashamed of it! I mean, you would think that those highly educated people could have at least come up with something better!? But just the eruption like a giant boil! BANG – and it all came into existence! Well, it did! But God was the One that did it - God was the One which directed it! Not just by accident.

1. Can I prove that God exists?

Remember, earlier, I asked, “Is there a God?” Can you know it – can you prove it!? And, Mr. [Herbert W. Armstrong](#) and Mr. Ted Armstrong wrote booklets - and I have a feeling that Mr. Ted did most of the writing but... he gave seven proofs that God exists. I often come back to this, and I have used this in conversations with people. I’ve even written *this* at times on the Internet – different places.

CREATION – the very fact that we have a creation requires that at some time there was a Creator. It just didn’t happen by accident!

DESIGN – throughout the whole of the universe there’s design. From a snowflake to different mineral deposits. You look – the scientists tell you – at an atom, that you have a little nucleus and flying around it like little satellites are electrons. But it’s the same thing you see when you look at the Earth! You see the Earth (the nucleus) and flying around it is a satellite. Well, you look at the entire solar system. You see the Sun (the nucleus) and

surrounding it are these little satellites. The design is consistent throughout nature. It's consistent because it had ONE DESIGNER! The Almighty God!

LAWS – the existence of laws require that those laws came from somewhere. I mean the old song, “What goes up, must come down.” And all of you know – you know when you're a child you can run around the room, fall down, you just get up, dust off your knee and just keep right on going. But, when you get a certain age – and I won't name anybody – the idea of falling down just isn't a whole lot of fun. *Gravity* is a good thing, and when I get out of the shower, gravity is a bad thing! I don't have my teenage figure anymore – I don't know where it went!?

FRICTION – I was thinking about friction this morning getting into the shower. Normally I don't like friction. Because it slows everything down, makes it heavier. Increase gasoline mileage, wears you out.

But think about it, if you had no friction – try getting into a wet bathtub. Or shower. Why you would just – BAM! Be like walking on ice! So friction, not always as bad as we think it is!

But all these laws that govern everything consistently happen over and over and over. And all true science is - is an organized philosophical thought which has made accurate observations of the laws which God put into effect. They didn't create the laws, they just have observed the handy work of God!

LIFE – I've watered a lot of rocks in my life, not one of them has come to life! But those potatoes I put in a few days ago, boy, that's so hard for me to conceive – you order, they call them “Seed Potatoes,” and they just look like normal potatoes when you get them! And they say, “Now, take this potato and cut it up into chunks, make sure that each chunk has one or two eyes, and let it dry out a couple of days, and then plop it into the ground.” And I say to myself, “Why doesn't it just rot!?” But I am assured that in a few days I'm gonna look out there and my little potato plants are going to come up! And I hope so, because it was a long time putting all that in. LIFE COMES FROM LIFE! And life requires a life giver! The continuation of all things, albeit our bodies or earth, the solar system, or atoms, and molecules, and the polarity of North or South Pole, all of this requires that something sustains it! And so the universe requires a Sustainer. And all of this points to God.

FULFILLED PROPHECIES – your non-believers would have a little more difficult time explaining. And that is the fact that you can look in the pages of the Bible and see prophecies which were fulfilled! How does something happen four-hundred years in the future exactly the way God said it was going to happen!? Or sometimes four-millennia in the future!? Fulfilled prophecy, a proof that there is a great God and that the Bible is indeed His rule Book!

And then the ultimate proof that God exists is MIRACLES. If you've never seen a miracle, it would be sort-of hard to understand one. I think I have. And I'm amazed! You know the times when I've maybe had that opportunity were the moments when I was at some of my

lowest points in life. At that very moment a great Being, I think, took pity and said, “I think the kid needs a little encouragement right now.” Wham! Saw something that no way can be explained other than the fact that God intervened!

You have the miracles of illnesses and diseases, and maladies being cured. And if you think about it, the greatest miracle or the greatest healing of all is the resurrection of a dead body and bring it back to life! We, unfortunately, have not yet seen that in this age. But the Bible talks about it happening many times! Where people who were dead came back to life! How do you explain that, other than – a great Creator God!? And the greatest resurrection of all is when a human being changes from mortal into immortal! Up to now, it’s only happened ONE TIME! Jesus Christ! But in the future, that opportunity will be open to the vast array of mankind! And *we*, who hopefully, are among His firstfruits, will be the first to experience *that*! And I think about the fact that there are people who are now reading this, who have an excellent chance for the first time in the history of mankind, to never die! If we live long enough, maybe some of us can see that!?

Search the Scriptures

Well, if God exists – and the Bible is His Word – then we need to learn what the Book says about it! In **2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 16** – “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, ...” He also wrote in the **2nd chapter of 2nd Timothy, verse 15** – “[Study, obviously meaning what!? Study the Bible] to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.” And Jesus Christ Himself said in **John chapter 5, verse 39** – “...’**search the Scriptures, for in them you** [will know that] **you have eternal life; ...**” And then **John chapter 17, verse 17** – “...’**Your Word is truth.**” Where do we go to get our information about death and dying and the fate of the dead, the future of the dead!? It’s *from* the Bible! Not blindly believing and following the traditions and practices of human beings and human institutions. And yes, that’s what most people do! They just want to run to their priest, their rabbi, their pastor, their whatever, and say, “Tell me what the Bible says!” Well folks, God gave us a brain, and he gave us the ability – most of us if we don’t have a problem – to read, and then He gave us the Bible, and He provided the opportunity for the Bible to be translated, and almost everyone reading this has, probably, five or six copies of the Holy Bible! READ THE BOOK! Don’t rely upon some supposed “holy” man. Don’t rely upon some collection of human traditions. Grandmother was a wonderful person, most likely, but it doesn’t mean she understood the truth of God.

And for a lot of us, or most people in our society, they’re a Catholic, or Baptist, or Methodist, or whatever, because mom and dad was. Because grandmother and grandfather before them were.

Well, we get to these ideas which cause so much confusion. *The soul*. The word soul in the Old Testament, in the *Strong’s Concordance* is word # 5315. And it’s simply the word *nephesh*, you’ve heard this word many a time. And all that it means is “a breathing creature.” We are souls. It’s not that we *have* one, we are souls. And my pet kitty-cats are souls. And the birds which flirt around outside are souls. And the horses and cows, deer,

and elk, and everything else that runs around as a breathing creature *is* - Biblically speaking - a soul. Human kind doesn't understand that. They somehow think that we have this *immortal soul*. And yet, **Ezekiel chapter 18, verses 4 & 20** say, "The soul [the being, the living creature] who sins shall die." Now, if you believe in the Bible, my Protestant and Catholic friend, how do you explain these Scriptures!? Or, do you simply take a black marker, and just mark them out!? And make believe they don't exist!? Are you like the guy who goes to the smorgasbord – the spiritual smorgasbord – and just picks out the things that he wants!? That's what most people do! Most people's approach to religion is just picking out the things that they like! And they ignore everything they don't like. But, you've got the whole Book – you need to study the whole Book! You can't just blindly throw stuff away because Pastor Jones doesn't agree with *that* or doesn't teach *that*.

An Immortal Soul?

Well, *the immortal soul*. That's when they really ramp up the soul idea. Not only – they say, "I have a soul." But now, "I am an immortal soul!" Really!? **1st Timothy chapter 1, verse 17** – it reads, "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, [the only] God who alone is wise, ..." – Paul said that *God* was immortal. **1st Timothy chapter 6, verse 15** – "...the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, **16)** who ALONE has immortality, ..." Was Paul lying, my Protestant and Catholic friends!? Or, did he mean exactly what he said!? That *only* God is immortal. And for a human being to think that somehow he or she is somehow immortal is actually ascribing to yourself the very characteristics which belong to God! That's a dangerous game to play! **Ecclesiastes chapter 9, verses 5 & 10** – it says, "...the dead know nothing, ..." No, they're not an immortal soul! "...there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom IN THE GRAVE WHERE YOU ARE GOING."

When we die we go to sleep. And we have not the vaguest understanding of what is happening or the passage of time. And we're not in pain, we're not roasting in "hell," and we're certainly not floating around on clouds somewhere in the "great beyond."

If you would, turn to **Psalms chapter 103, verse 13** – "...the LORD pities those who fear Him [He has empathy with us]. **14)** For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust." I've often said that we're nothing more than walking, living, *dirt*. Because everything we are, everything we put into our mouth, came from the soil, or came from a stream, river, or pond, or a well. We are nothing more than a collection of beets and radishes, and carrots, and cabbage, and whatever else we might consume, albeit good or bad. He goes on to say, **Verse 15** – "As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. **16)** For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more." – just gone. And I often, when I read these passages and passages like it, I think of that song from the 1980s – by the group called Kansas, [*Dust in the Wind*](#). How many of you remember that song!? Great song! Haunting. "All we are is dust in the wind." And that's all we are! Unless God intervenes, at some future time, and restores our life in one form or another! **Romans chapter 6, verse 23** – again, I don't know how

the Protestants and Catholics cope with this next comment. The apostle Paul – and you gotta believe that the apostle Paul who spent three and a half years, as it were, in private study with Jesus Christ out in the deserts of Arabia, you have to think that maybe Paul knows what he’s talking about! And Paul probably knows a whole lot more than the local priests, pastors, or rabbis, imams, or whoever else they go to. He said, “the wages of sin is *death*.” He didn’t say, the wages of sin is ‘burning in hell fire.’ Or, being in ‘limbo.’ Or, some other – being a cricket – remember reincarnation. “O’ don’t step on that cricket, it might be your grandmother!”? Well, no, it’s ‘the wages of sin is DEATH!’ “...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” We are not immortal. We are inherently temporary. And every year that passes, every candle on our birthday cake screams at us – doesn’t it!? O’ it doesn’t scream when your twenty. And it doesn’t scream at you when you’re thirty. But somewhere there in the early forties it starts peeping. And, all of a sudden, one day, you find yourself getting up out of a chair, and you start to make those grunting sounds. “Where did that come from!?” And then you look in the mirror and – for some of us – you say, “Where did my hairline go!?” And you say, “What hairline, fella!? What’s all that gray stuff!?” “What are all these wrinkles I’m looking at!?” My Mom said one time, and I’ll betcha many of you who are a little older can identify with her, she was up in her upper seventies and said, “When I think in my mind who I am, I’m still twenty years old, able to get out and play tennis. And then I look in the mirror, and I ask myself, ‘who is that person?’” Well we are *not* immortal. We do not possess an immortal soul. We are inherently temporary. We are all hoping that God, someday, will grant to us the gift of eternal life, and *then* we will have immortality!

Not While Flesh and Blood

1st Corinthians chapter 15 – and, again, the whole chapter of 1st Corinthians 15 is great! **Verse 50** – “Now this I say, brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*” – did you know the Mormons, I am told, believe that you enter eternal life as a physical human being!? In a physical state!? That’s what they told me out in Arizona! Every time I read this verse I go, “What do ya do with that one!?” “Well, we just don’t read that one! We read something else, from the Book of Mormon.” **Verse 51** – “Behold, I tell you a mystery [a great unknown, because the people of the world do not understand this!]: We shall not all sleep, ...” – again, death is portrayed as sleep. “but we shall all be changed – **52**) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” – and that is what all of us – that is the hope of eternal life – which all of us, at one level or another, that is why we’re *here*!! That’s why we, the collective group, is *here*!! Because we’re hoping and praying that God will grant us the mercy of giving us eternal life. And we want it for ourselves, and we want it for the ones we have loved. And all of you reading this, know people who now sleep. And you wait, and you wait, and you wait. But someday – if you believe there is a God, and you believe in the Bible – you know that someday you are going to see them again! And, every time I think of that, I think about the idea of ‘what if.’ What if I didn’t make it!? What if I go haywire and go off into the deep end!? I will never have that opportunity to see them

again! And can you imagine how sad, how broken hearted they would be, when they come up out of the grave and say, “Where’s my wife/husband/child/friend!?” And you’re not there! For their sake we simply cannot fail to hang onto this gift that God is freely giving to us. We just have to hang on!

Hang on to the end! He says in **Verse 53** – “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54**) So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: *‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’*” – where we will actually have the opportunity to mock death! “You had your icy fingers around me once, but no more fella – get outta here! Because LIFE has won out! Because Jesus Christ has won out! Because the power of God has won out over you!” “Death – you are now vanquished!” That’s a great day to look forward to!

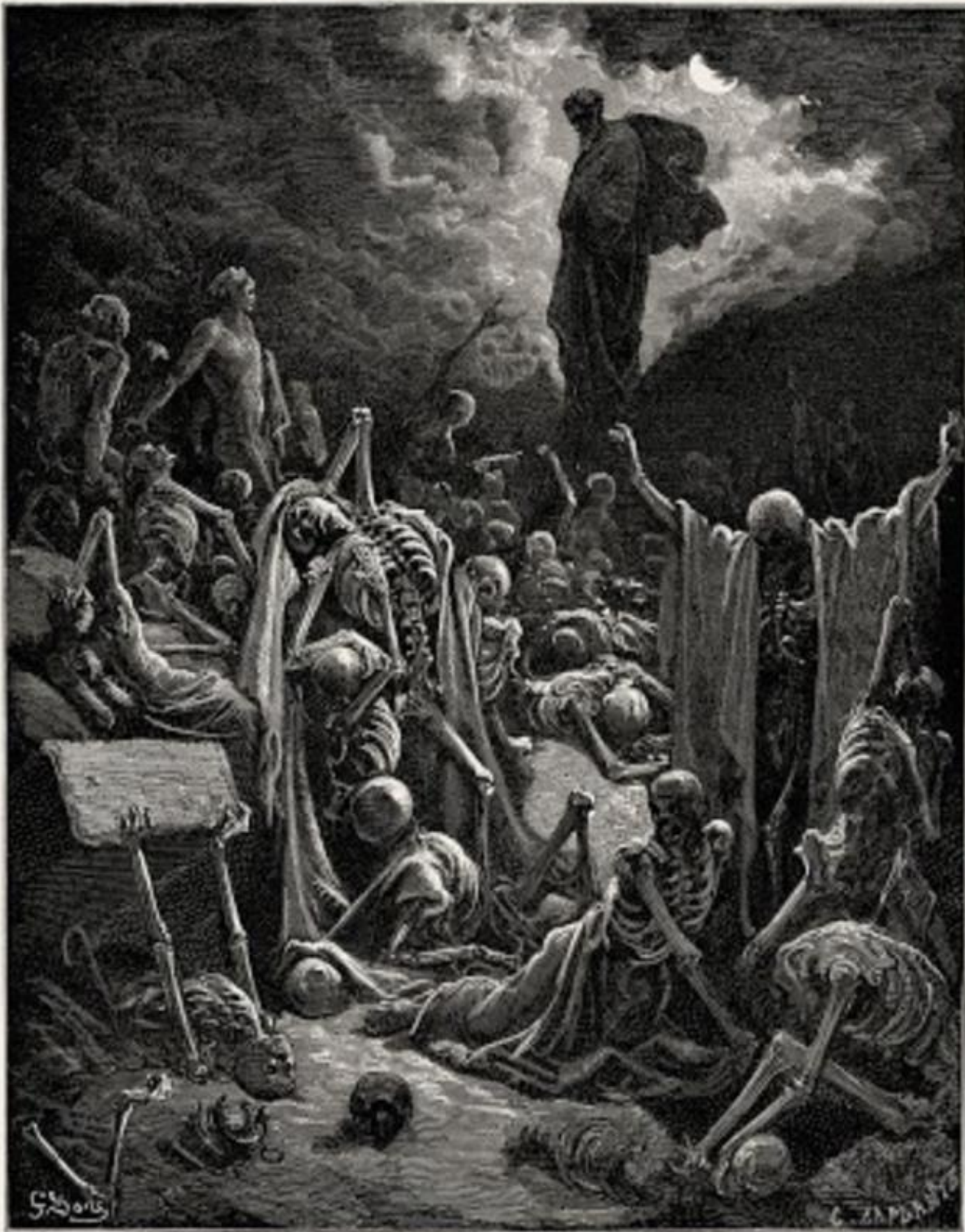
the Resurrection from death

We reviewed what Jesus said in **John chapter 3, verse 13**. This is just three verses before the beloved John 3:16. ‘That God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.’ And again, beautiful statement, I fully accept it and encompass it. But the people of the world do not want to read three verses earlier, when He says, “**‘No [man] has ascended to Heaven but He who came down from Heaven, ...’**” – speaking of Himself!

“...**‘that is, the Son of man ...’**” We had already mentioned Jesus Christ had nothing to say about the immortality of the soul, “going to Heaven,” “going to Hell,” however, He did specifically mention several items which are pivotal in understanding the truth of God concerning the fate of the dead, eternal life, and the Kingdom of God. He talked about resurrection from death.

Now again, I just don’t know if the people of the churches of the world ever stop and consider that if you’re going to have a future resurrection from the dead, then you simply have not gone off to Heaven! Or, you haven’t gone down to Hell! If you just plainly take what the Bible says, it offers no possibility of immortality of the soul, or “going to Heaven,” “going to Hell.” And yet these are the basic tenants of modern Christianity.

You know in many miracles concerning resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ demonstrated that through the power and the intervention of God, a dead human being could be brought back to the land of the living. So notably with the example of Lazarus, and including Jesus’ life. And through the example of His own death and resurrection Jesus Christ demonstrated, that a formerly deceased human being can be resurrected – and for three-days HE WAS DEAD. A lot of religions don’t want to accept that! And yet the Book of Revelation plainly says, ‘He was dead for three days and three nights.’ The Creator of life, the Creator of the universe, for three days and three nights, had not one ounce of life within Him! Until it was restored to Him by God the Father! And He set a precedent that a human being could walk out of his grave or his tomb and become an eternal member of the Family of God! That’s a precedent which all of us now have a chance to follow.



Ezekiel 37 - "The Valley of Dry Bones"

We should be so thoroughly appreciative and thankful that not only did Jesus die for our sins, but He also walked out of His tomb. Because had He not walked out of His tomb, it all would have been meaningless! But He did! And therefore He has offered to all of us the same opportunity!

Notice **Matthew chapter 22** – when He talks about some ideas that the churches of the world... they just don't get it! **Verse 23** – “The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, ...” – as opposed to the Pharisees, which did believe in a resurrection. But, I don't think they had a very clearly defined understanding of what it meant. But they had that hope. The Sadducees, the other part of the temple elite, they didn't believe in a resurrection at all. And they asked Him – and they're being tricky here, being disingenuous – they say, **Verse 24** – “Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. **25)** Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. **26)** Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. **27)** Last of all the woman died also. **28)** Therefore, ...” – again they're being disingenuous because they don't even believe in a resurrection – some vaguely defined idea. But they said, “in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had [been married to her].” And Jesus said in **Verse 29** – “...**You are mistaken, not knowing [not understanding] the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30) For in the resurrection ...**” – there He said it as plain as day! Jesus Christ stated in His own Words – there will be an event called *the resurrection*! In fact we know that's not just limited to one moment and one time, but there are in a fact sort-of a series. “...**For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in Heaven. 31) But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 32) 'I AM the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.**”

And He was actually poking them at that point, because they didn't even believe in a resurrection. He was telling 'em, “You guys – you Sadducees – you're so far off, you don't understand that God is going to be the God of the living for all eternity – in due time!

Notice **Mark chapter 12, verse 18** – this is Mark's version of what we just read. But notice **Verse 25** for some more *specific* language. “**For when they rise from the dead, ...**” Jesus plainly said it! Again, if you're already in Heaven, or if you're already in Hell, why do you need to rise from the dead!? These two ideas are totally incongruent. But the Word of God talks about a resurrection – the churches of the world talk about “going to Heaven,” “going to Hell.” They're just two incompatible thoughts.

Luke chapter 20 – again, I think this is Luke's version of what we just read. But he has a little different wording in one verse, which adds a little highlight. He says in **Verse 36**, He talks about near the end of the verse – “...**'being [the children] of the resurrection.**”

Luke chapter 14 – He gives some comments about *resurrection*. Again, resurrection does not comport with the idea of the immortality of the soul. If the soul is immortal there's no need for a resurrection. And yet, Jesus Christ did not talk about the immortality

of the soul, He talked about *a* resurrection – meaning when people die, they die. And then sometime they will be brought back to life. **Verse 14** – “*And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.*” Now, He even adds another qualifier. There’s a resurrection from dead, but *a resurrection of the just*. Where they literally become the children of God!

So again, Jesus Christ didn’t highlight it in big bold letters, but it’s right there in your Bible for you to see or anybody else to see!

Notice John chapter 5 – again, I do not know how the churches of the world handle what Jesus actually said in John 5! I one time – and I may have told this story before. I went in one time – now they’re called *LifeWay* – but back then they were called *Baptist Bible Bookstore*. And I was looking for some booklet or some information, and they didn’t have it, and a clerk came up to me – a fully mature woman, probably in her fifties – I wasn’t speaking with some child. And I just couldn’t resist myself, I got a little mischievous, and I said, “I have a question about the rapture.” And I said, “Do you believe in the rapture!?” And, O she threw her shoulders back and almost clicked her heels and exclaimed, “O’ yes I do!” And you could see on her face – “O’ I’m gonna get to testify!” Which is big news in some of those denominations. TESTIFY! And I said, “Well, I have another question. What if say, John Brown, just a hypothetical. Now, he’s a good man, been a good man all of his life. He was a good boy, a good son, a good brother. Got married, was a great husband, never did anything wrong. Had children, was a wonderful father, wonderful grand-father. Never strayed, never did anything wrong. Well, he died last week.” I said in this conversation. I said, “Where is John Brown right now!?” And the lady looked at me and she got this sort-of beatific smile, she even put her hands together as if in prayer. *There’s the church, there’s the steeple. Open the door, and see the people.* But, she’s got this little hand thing going, and she sort-of tilted her head, like a puppy dog listening to the music on the radio. She goes, “O’ he’s up in Heaven!” I said, “He is? Then why does Jesus have to come back and take them back to Heaven!?” Because that’s what *they* teach – in the rapture, Jesus is gonna come down and swoop by and pick up all those dead people and take them to Heaven. I said, “So, you say, ‘Jesus is gonna take them up to Heaven at the rapture, but, you just told me he’s already there!?’ So, why does He have to do that!?” It’s a question that a 5th grader could have easily asked. And she got stumped, she got quiet for about a minute, didn’t know what to say. She stormed to the back room, got her sweater and purse, and ran out the front door. I must have made a bad day for her – all I could figure was that she was gonna go over to pastor Smith’s house and find out – “Hey, what’s the answer to this question, because I didn’t have a clue of how to answer it!”

Well, they don’t know how to answer it because they don’t understand that dead means dead, and resurrection means resurrection. There is no immortality of the soul, and you don’t go fleeting off to Heaven, or down to Hell! You wait for God’s appointed time and then you will live again! In whatever state He so decides – albeit divine or mortal.

John chapter 5, verse 24 – “*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who [has] My word and believes [on] Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment [or*

condemnation], but has [or will pass] from death into life. 25) Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when THE DEAD will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.” **Verse 28** – “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are IN THE GRAVES will hear His voice 29) and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” – again, if they’re already in Heaven, or if they’re already in Hell, why do they have to come back to life again!? The Bible plainly makes it clear there is no immortality of the soul! We’re told by Paul, ‘only God and Jesus Christ have immortality.’ We are limited human beings, subject to death.

We Will Someday Be Immortal

And then, **2nd Timothy chapter 2, verse 7** – “Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.” – here’s Paul wanting us to have understanding on *this*. **Verse 8** – “Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to [as we have spoken], **9**) for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the Word of God is not chained. **10**) Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” **Verse 11** – “This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. **12**) If we endure, We shall also reign with Him.” – but sadly enough, “if we deny Him, He also will deny us.” – let’s not think on that part.

And then **2nd Timothy chapter 1, verse 6** – Paul said, “Timothy, “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. **7**) For God has not given us a spirit of fear, ...” – remember, Paul’s comment about most people spend their entire lives in bondage of the fear of death!? That is not to be our fear! But He has given us instead a spirit “of power and of love and of a sound mind.” – and a part of that soundness comes from the fact that *we know* that when our eyes close for the last time, our heart stops beating, and our lungs stop – *we know* that we will live again! Because the power of Jesus Christ will make it so!

Verse 8 – “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, **9**) who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, ...” – the calling He has given us is to be eternal members of His eternal Family! “not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before [the world] began.”

But it will soon be obvious – **Verse 10** – “...by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through [this Message] ...” We are not an immortal soul, but someday, through the gift of God, we will be immortal!

Are the Dead Now in Heaven!?

Well, what is this thing about Heaven!? I love to make fun of ‘em – O’ I don’t know if I’m making fun of ‘em, I guess I am a bit – [Billy Graham](#), I loved his voice, I absolutely loved it, the greatest voice accent I ever heard. But every time I think of Billy Graham I see him in front of the television, and back in the old days, I saw him on Larry King Live one night. And here he’s talking to [Larry King](#), who’s Jewish – to my knowledge doesn’t even believe in Jesus Christ. And he said, “I’s goin’ to Heaven!” And then he looked at Larry King and said, “Larry, you’re goin’ to Heaven!” And Larry King was a little befuddled by all that. But, we live in a culture in which people believe that upon their death they’re going to go off to Heaven. And every funeral I’ve ever gone to, even the most scandalous rascal you could ever think of, they always – the minister would get up there and say, “Well just at the last minute, at the last moment in time, he looked up and he gave his heart to the Lord! And now, old Sam, he’s up there in Heaven looking down on us.” They just preoccupy. I’ve said this before, I just want to go to a funeral sometime and they preach the guy into Hell! “He was such a rotten no good person that’s he’s got to be down there! If anybody deserves it, he deserves it!” But I’ve never heard it, they always preach ‘em to Heaven.

Well, what does the Bible say!? **John chapter 3, verse 13** – now, these are the Words of Jesus Christ! You believe them or you don’t! And why there are people who say they are Christian, who say they represent Christ and His Church, and yet they do not believe what He plainly said! He said, “**No one has ascended to Heaven but He who came down from Heaven, that is, the Son of man ...**” He said in **John chapter 7, verses 34 & 36** – “**You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am [or where I’m going to be] you cannot come.**” ‘there you cannot make it.’ He plainly says, ‘You cannot make it where I’m going! I’m gonna make it to the throne of God, but you aren’t.’

John chapter 8, verse 21 – “**...I am going away, and you will seek Me, ... Where I go you cannot come.**” How does it get anymore plain than that!? And yet, tomorrow morning around the world people will be told that ‘if they’re good and obey God, they’ll go off to Heaven.’ **Romans chapter 10, verse 6** – “**...Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ...**” – and yet, that’s what mankind – the Western world has done! **Psalms chapter 146, verse 4** – speaking of mankind he said, “His [breath] departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his [thoughts] perish.” We read in Ecclesiastes where ‘the dead know nothing’ - have no conscious understanding of anything. As the Bible says, ‘deeply, profoundly asleep.’

Think about King David. David has ascribed in the Bible the title ‘a man after God’s own heart.’ And notice what was said of him on the first day of Pentecost – go back to **Acts chapter 2**. Now, these are not concepts which are new to people who are reading this – largely. But again it just defies the imagination how we live in a culture where they uniformly, manifestly, believe that they’re gonna go to Heaven. And the Bible says NOTHING ABOUT IT! NOT A WORD! Not a sentence, not a phrase, not a clue! And it says here of David, **Verse 29** – “Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the

patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.” Now if ever a person should be in Heaven – if there is such a destination for mankind – you’d think it would be David, who’s called ‘a man after God’s own heart’! And yet we’re plainly told ‘he’s in his tomb.’ **Verse 34** – “For David did not ascend into the heavens, ...” – it just can’t get any more clearer than that!

If you turn a few pages, **Acts chapter 13, verse 22** – concerning David, “And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, *I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart*, who will do all My will.” And **Verse 36** – “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep [Biblical language for death], was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption.” – slowly his flesh decayed away, and probably even eventually his bones turned into dust. But, notice what we read about David in **Jeremiah chapter 30, verse 9** – speaking of a yet future time, a yet future age – after the Day of the Lord, verse 7 mentions that – “But they [speaking of Israel; people of the seed of Israel] shall serve the LORD their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them.” – a future resurrection of David. Because right now he’s in the ground. Been there for a long, long, time – millennia. But in a future era of time, David will live, and actually be the king of Israel! We’re told the exact same thing over in **Ezekiel chapter 34, verses 23, 24** – “I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them – My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. **24**) And I, the LORD will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.” David is in his grave right now. But in a yet future era of time, David will be the king of all Israel! Notice **Ezekiel chapter 37, verses 24, 25** – notice at the end of **Verse 23** – “...”Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.” – this is after the resurrection of the “White Throne Judgment.” “David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. **25**) Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever.” So again, I will say to my Catholic and Protestant friends, how can you substantiate the idea that you’re gonna go off to Heaven when you die – because that’s what you’ve been taught by your religious leaders – and yet IT CANNOT BE FOUND IN THE BIBLE!? In fact, just the opposite is found!

Was Lazarus In Heaven?

Well, let’s go to Lazarus. Because this quintessential story also makes something very plain. If Lazarus walked out of the tomb, and supposedly he was a good guy – a friend of Jesus – why wasn’t he in Heaven!? He was in the tomb – he’d been there for *four* days! It says in **Verse 1 of John chapter 11** – “Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. **2**) It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. **3**) Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, ‘Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.’” – this was a close family friend. Jesus loved these people. They were close to Him.

Verse 4 – “When Jesus heard *that*, He said, ‘**This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.**’ **5)** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **6)** So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.” – He made no attempt to show up. **Verse 7** – “Then after this He said to the disciples, ‘**Let us go to Judea again.**’ **8)** The disciples said to Him, ‘[Master], lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?’ **9)** Jesus answered, ‘**Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10) But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.**’ **11)** These things He said, and after that He said to them, ‘**Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.**’” – He is plainly stating that *death* – Lazarus hadn’t fled up to Heaven or gone down to Hell. He was simply ‘asleep.’ Didn’t know a thing. No pain, no nothing. **Verse 12** – “Then His disciples said, ‘Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.’ **13)** However, Jesus spoke of his death, ...” – He had to get very clear. “but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.” **Verse 14** – “Then Jesus said to them plainly, ‘**Lazarus IS DEAD.**’” – ‘do you get it!? He’s not gonna wake up from this nap! Unless I do something!’ **Verse 15** – “**And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.**”

He’s saying, ‘I’m glad he’s now dead, because all of you are going to see something which your eyes need to see! You need to understand that I have the power of life and death. And at My Word, with the help of God the Father, I can bring a human being back to life!’

Verse 16 – “Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with Him.’ **17)** So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.” **Verse 18** – “Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. **19)** And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. **20)** Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary [still grieving] was sitting in the house. **21)** Now Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, [‘if You’d come a little sooner, if You’d heeded what I tried to tell You’] my brother would not have died. **22)** But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” – so, even though she was perturbed, she still had great respect for Jesus, and faith in His power! **Verse 23** – “Jesus said to her, ‘**Your brother will rise again.**’ **24)** Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’” – so she was of a religious training where she understood that there was gonna be some type of resurrection. **Verse 25** – “Jesus said to her, ‘**I AM the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26) And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?**”

Well, to make a long story short, Jesus finally went to the tomb, and He had tears in His eyes (and I heard different speculations), said, **Verse 35** – the shortest verse in the Bible – “Jesus wept.” A lot of people say, “It’s unmanly to weep!” Well, you gonna tell Jesus He was unmanly!? Jesus was motivated by something – something was very important to Him! I don’t know if He saw the suffering of His friends, or He was troubled by their unbelief, or just realized the tragedy of human death!? Because He was witnessing it up close and personal. But He was deeply moved! And then, basically, He said a prayer.

He said in **Verse 41** – “...’Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. **42**) And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me.’ **43**) Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’” – and to the shock and dismay of everybody in that crowd, **Verse 44** – “And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Loose him, [‘get all that stuff off of him’] and let him go.’ **45**) Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed [on] Him.” – because of *that* – they saw the power of the resurrection!

Well, that’s a fantastic story, but, it demonstrates that Jesus and the family of Lazarus *knew* that there was a resurrection ‘at the last day.’ And they *knew* that he was dead, as Jesus said, ‘He sleeps, he’s dead.’ And yet, the people of our culture, want to believe that somehow when a person dies and they always “go off to Heaven.” As you notice. No matter how bad they were, they always “go off to Heaven.”

From the Mouth of Babes

I often – when I think of these statements – I probably have told this story before, because it’s one of my favorite ever stories. I was out in Arizona at the end of my stay there. It was a Saturday afternoon, it was about 113 degrees, just blistering hot! And, I was inside my house, trying to stay cool, I had had my Bible out a little earlier – on my little work table. And all of a sudden, O’ about 3 o’clock in the afternoon – the very hottest part of the day, there’s a knock at my door. So I got up, opened the door, and I saw a man all dressed up – shirt, tie, coat. And behind him he had two – obviously his two daughters. And they were all dressed up in their Sunday go to meetin’ best! And my first thought was empathy, this poor man, his car has stopped, he needs water for his radiator. He needs jumper cables, he needs to use the telephone. That was my initial reaction. And then I sort-of look at them a little closer and... and I love this, this was his opening comment to me, “IF YOU DIE TONIGHT, WOULD YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL GO TO HEAVEN, OR WOULD IT GO TO HELL!?” And I thought, “My, what a pleasant man. I sure enjoy this!” And I should have just closed the door and said, “Get lost!” But, I was intrigued by it. So, I walked outside, and, he started going on, and, I said, “Well, fella, you just said three things that I totally do not agree with!” And, he was sort-of startled. He said, “What!?” I said, “Well, you talked about my immortal soul. You talked about goin’ off to Heaven, or going down to Hell. And I don’t believe in any of them!” O’ this really staggered him. It rocked his world! And we began a discussion, and I started quoting verses. I could have easily gone and - six feet inside – and grabbed my Bible, but he had a little pocket edition. So I said, “Sir, do you mind if I take this Bible here in your pocket?” I took it out of his pocket and I started reading verses. One was Revelation chapter 5, verse 10. I show that to him – I thought the guy was gonna faint. I don’t think he’d ever seen it before. He’s just shocked! And at one point, the girls back there were looking bored, “There’s dad going on and on.” And I wanted to include them. And I said, “Young ladies, I’m going to include you in this discussion.” I said, “I’m going to begin a verse, and you’re going to end it.” And they got nervous, I said, “No. Don’t be nervous, I got no doubt you’ll know this!” Because I’m sure

these children were in church from the time they were in diapers and little babies. And so I said, “Blessed are the meek, for they...” And I pointed to them. And right on cue, perfect unison, “they shall inherit the Earth.” And the father actually turned and gave them this look like, “You’re betraying me!” No, I thought, “From the mouth of babes you have heard the truth.” And, this poor man. It turned out, he was the pastor of this little church. He had some people who were sort-of flooding the neighborhood. He had a couple congregation members walk down the street. And he was waving at them, trying to get them to come over – he needs help, he’s sinking fast. And they just wave and go, “O’ hi John, how are you doing!?” They thought he was waving! Well, finally, he went on his way. I’m sure he’s never forgotten that.

But, where did Jesus get *that* comment!? Well, He got it from **Psalm chapter 37, verse 9** – “...But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth.” And then in **Verse 11** – “But the meek shall inherit the earth, ...” And in **Verse 22** – “For those blessed by Him [by God] shall inherit the earth, ...” Jesus Christ was simply quoting from the Old Testament.

And now we have a chance to quote the New Testament. Now, why people don’t get it is a mystery to me. Well, with all of the Scriptures which we have just read, and I skipped over a lot of them, how could anyone continue to believe that the souls of true believers – whatever that is – fly off to some distant poorly defined and delineated concept of Heaven!? Our eternal destiny – and the destiny of all mankind – is someday to know that the throne of God – Heaven itself – is coming to the Earth. The Kingdom of God is coming to the Earth! and we have been chosen to be in the vanguard of understanding that truth! We are such a blessed people. I, sometimes, don’t think we realize it and appreciate it enough! God has revealed to us TRUTH, that the vast majority of the earth do not understand. And yet, we do!

Well, preachers and teachers from many religious backgrounds and traditions often go to great lengths to vex and torment and control their followers with the prospect and the threat that they just might go to hell. Many branches of mainstream Christianity are seemingly obsessed with the intimidating and frightening terrorizing concept of the unsaved (whoever they are, each group has a different category) spending all eternity in utter agony, in the never-ending throws and sufferings of eternal hellfire. Well, to be quite honest, I do not believe, that I could respect and love a God that would actually contemplate and initiate such a macabre plan. And, please be forewarned, this next comment might be disturbing to some, but it gets a point across. To believe that God – who proclaims that He is a God of love and mercy – to actually have a plan in which wayward souls are tortured in such an unbelievably cruel and savagely manner, is tantamount and comparable to someone roasting their children or their favorite pets over a backyard barbeque pit! Simply and undeniably horrifying and revolting thought! And yet, that is exactly what many people in mainstream Christianity – how they attempt to characterize and portray the God whom they claim they love, admire, adore, and worship! For a human being, or for a human institution, to depict God Almighty and Jesus Christ as divine beings who would actually devise and initiate such a demonistic, fiendish, and

diabolical plan, is the epitome of disrespect, dishonor, and disservice to the name, the nature, and reputation of God.

It is nothing short of complete and utter blaspheme! Isn't it so tantalizing ironic to realize that so many mainstream nominal Christians are highly invested in the concept of the immortal soul, or the idea of "going off to Heaven," or "going down to Hell." And yet, here's the irony, Jesus Christ NEVER mentioned it! In one sense it would have been far easier for the multitude of generations which would follow Him to properly and correctly understand the truth concerning death, dying, the state of the dead, the ultimate fate of the dead, had indeed Jesus Christ given a sermon or made an official pronouncement in which He proclaimed, "Well, do not believe – somewhere down the road, do not believe – the incorrect idea that you *have* and that you *are* an immortal soul." Wouldn't that be nice if that were in Matthew chapter 19, or 20, or wherever!? And wouldn't it have been a little easier had He just said, "Do not believe the falsehood that someday – if you're a good person – you'll fly off to Heaven! And, to be in residence and the very throne of God!"? Or had He said, "Do not believe the fallacious concept that if you're an evil person (however that's defined) you will be eternally damned to agonize and suffer in hellfire." Well, why wasn't Jesus Christ more blunt, more direct on these topics, more clear, more easily understandable!? And this is a topic that caused a lot of consternation.

God will dwell in Zion!

And, it gets down to this – either you believe the Bible, or you don't! Now, if you are a member of a church, whoever they are out there – Protestant, Catholic – they can believe their leaders all they want, they have the right to do so, we live in America, free country. They can believe their great religious potentate's, the holy men of their religion. If their religious group has one. They can believe it all they want, but, it doesn't change the fact that what *they* believe cannot be substantiated by the Word of God!

It can't even become closely substantiated. And just the opposite – passage after passage, line after line – demonstrates that God Himself is going to live on the Earth! Notice **Zechariah chapter 2, verse 10** – "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I AM coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD. **11)** 'Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. **12)** And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem." **Zechariah chapter 8, verse 2** – "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I AM zealous for Zion with great zeal; With great fervor I AM zealous for her.' **3)** 'Thus says the LORD: 'I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain.'" **Verse 8** – "...They shall be My people And I will be their God, ..." – it's the one relationship which God has always desired! And you could give a sermon on that one phrase. 'And they shall be My people And I will be their God.' And He said, "In truth and righteousness." **Verse 21** – "The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD, And seek the LORD of hosts. ...'"

Verse 22 – “Yes, many peoples and strong nations Shall come to seek the LORD of hosts ... [where!?] ... in JERUSALEM, And to pray before the LORD.” **Verse 23** – “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘In these days ten men from every language of the nation’s [people, tourists, strangers] shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man [the chosen people], saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is [literally] with you.’” – in JERUSALEM! Zechariah chapter 14 – we’ve heard this Scripture, this prophecy so many times. And, it’s second nature to us, and yet to our neighbors, and to our family members, they’ve never heard it – or if they’ve heard it, they didn’t understand it or they didn’t believe it.

And they don’t believe it, because they have been taught the exact opposite. They *don’t know why* they think they’re going off to Heaven – they cannot give you a proof other than, “That’s what my preacher says.” “That’s what grandmother said.” “That’s what Uncle Sam said.” But it says, **Zechariah chapter 14, verse 4** – “And in that Day His feet [referring to the feet of JESUS CHRIST] will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east.” **Verse 5** – “...Thus the LORD my God will come, *And* all the saints with You.” – I like that part! Because we, the resurrected saints, are given the promise that we will be there too! **Verse 8** – “And in that Day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, ...” – and we hear many references and prophecies about this healing water that flows forth from Jerusalem. And as it says in the Book of Revelation – ‘for the healing of the nations.’ And why do the nations need to be healed!? Because one of the last events or segments of time on this Earth before the Return of Jesus Christ, *is* the Day of the Lord. A day in which God metes out His judgment on a world which has rejected Him! And almost everything is destroyed and physically burned up! Trees, grass, fields, everything! And, on that Day this Living Water goes forth, spreading all around the globe eventually. And there are many beautiful prophecies which talk about that! **Verse 9** – “And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be – ‘The LORD is One,’ And His name One.” **Verse 16** – “And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, *and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.*” Won’t they be surprised when they find out that people like you and me were doing this for years and decades – won’t they be surprised!? And you know, your friends and your neighbors always, “Why do you pack up in the Fall and go off somewhere!? What’s that all about!?” You know, sometimes we call it – in my conversations – I call it a “Church Convention,” a “little church get together.” But in truth, it’s the Feast of Tabernacles. Ordained by God. Substantiated by God. And in the future *all* human kind will keep the Feast of Tabernacles or they will be plagued into non-existence – is what Zachariah basically said. **Verse 17** – “And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.” – you know, it doesn’t take very long if it never rains on you – food stops and you die. So, they will eventually, sort-of, be strong-armed into keeping it.

Micah chapter 4 – this beautiful prophecy! Which resembles so much of what Isaiah chapter 2 says. I love this prophecy, I can remember Mr. Ted Armstrong often reading it and expounding on it and talking about it.



"The city [New Jerusalem] is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal [approx. 1,377 miles]."

- Revelation 21:16; NKJV

Verse 1 – “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD’S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. **2)** Many nations shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.’

For out of Zion [New Jerusalem] the law shall go forth, And the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem. **3)** He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.” - and isn’t that a day for all of us to hopefully look forward to! A day when JESUS CHRIST is King over all the earth and the act of war will simply be eliminated! Notice **Verse 7** – “...So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever.” – Mount Zion, the ancient city of David on the earth.

Notice **Joel chapter 3** – something very similar. **Verse 17** – “So you shall know that I AM the LORD your God, *Dwelling in Zion ...*” – God will not dwell in Heaven in the future! He’s going to live on the Earth! “My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy,

And no aliens [strangers] shall ever pass through her again.” **Verse 21** – “For I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted; For the LORD dwells in Zion.”

I do not know what my Protestant and Catholic friends do with these verses! I can only imagine that they never read them, or if they do read them they take out a black magic marker and just mark them out. Because it’s the exact opposite of what their religious leaders are teaching them. And I don’t know why they just can’t look into the Word of God and say, “You know, they’ve been lying to me! My religious leaders have not told me the truth! And I’m just gonna reevaluate everything I ever thought I knew about God and the Bible, and the Plan of God.” Well, the reason they don’t do it, is because at this present time, they’re not being called. But, someday they will be. And then they will finally understand. **Zephaniah chapter 3, verse 14** – “Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! **15**) The LORD has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You shall see disaster no more.” **Verse 17** – “The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, ...” God, living on the Earth! Isaiah chapter 2 – which is almost identical to what Micah wrote in Micah 4. And, Isaiah 2 and Isaiah 9 they’re very important chapters to me in my life.

I’ve told this story before, I was a little boy in Methodist propaganda class – I think they call it confirmation. And it was Wednesday afternoon, and a lot of my buddies were there. I loved going there because they served chocolate milk. And, you know, heroin doesn’t tempt me a bit, but chocolate milk! – that’s something to live for! To die for! Well, I’m sitting there waiting for my chocolate milk and the teacher, the lady up there with her little pamphlet, reading through it, and she came to the so-called ‘Lord’s Prayer.’ ‘Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on EARTH as it is in Heaven.’ My twelve-year-old brain heard the words she read. And I raised up my twelve-year-old little hand and said, “Teacher, does that mean exactly what I think it means!?” And she said, “What!?” “Does that mean that the Kingdom of God is coming to the Earth!?” I asked. And she got very flustered, she was not prepared for this, she wasn’t trained for it. And after about thirty seconds of very quiet elongated silence, she squinted her eyes at me as if to say, “You are a no-good trouble maker!” It’s a look I came to appreciate many times in my life as an umpire, I receive that look on a constant basis. Well, that question never left me. And four years later - I was now the age of sixteen - I was traveling down Indiana Route 66 on my way to Evansville, Indiana on my way to attend and participate in a karate class. And I turned on the radio because I was a little bored, and I went through the dials and I thought I came across the voice of Paul Harvey. Now at the time, in the late 60s, Paul Harvey was very popular, and my Dad always listened to him – and many times I was with my Dad, and I listened to Paul Harvey. But on this particular night I was somewhat confused, because Paul Harvey – instead of talking about news events, world events and different newsy ideas – was talking about prophecies and reading from the Bible. And he spent much of his time reading from the prophecies of Isaiah 9 and Isaiah 11. And this person who turned out not to be Paul Harvey, but in fact Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong, was talking

about the Return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God sometime in the near future on this earth. And for the first time in my life the question which first popped into my little brain at age twelve was being answered! And Mr. Ted's conclusion, his statement was, the Kingdom of God is coming to this EARTH and you who are hearing *this* have an opportunity to be a part of that kingdom! That evening changed my life!

And he says over in **Isaiah chapter 9** these beautiful words – **Verse 6** – “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7) Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” Well, I believe that! **Isaiah chapter 24, verse 23** – “...For the LORD of hosts will reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.” – or, as it says in another version, “His glory will be before His elders.” **Isaiah chapter 33, verse 17** – “Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; ...” – not far off in a far distant Heaven, but He will be on the EARTH! Human beings will see the ruling, reigning Jesus Christ! **Isaiah chapter 65, verse 17** – “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.” **Verse 18** – “But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. 19) I will rejoice IN JERUSALEM, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.” **Isaiah chapter 66, verse 1** – “Thus says the LORD: ‘Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?’” – well, He goes on to answer that question.

Verse 15 – “For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire.” – that's the Day of the LORD! Just before He returns, or as He's returning. **Verse 16** – “For by fire and by His sword The LORD will judge [plead with] all flesh; And the slain of the LORD shall be many.” – as we know, the nations of the world will convene in “Mount” Tell Megiddo – a place we call Armageddon. To actually fight the returning Jesus Christ! I guess they will think He's an angry E.T. or something!? Remember how lovable E.T. was!? But most – there was that television show which came on in 2011, Falling Skies. How many of you have heard of it or seen it? Alien creatures come to the Earth and start killing all the people! That's the traditional view of outer-space life. Well, as Mr. Ted said one time, “I do believe in alien lifeforms that will come from outer space. But They'll be called God.” Jesus Christ will one day invade this Earth, and will set up the Kingdom of God, and the nations of this world will try to fight against Him. And in the process, many of them will literally be destroyed. **Verse 18** – “...’I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.” – because Jesus Christ, the Lord of lords and King of kings will be residing on the EARTH!

Ezekiel chapter 37, verse 26 – “...’I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set *My sanctuary* [His residence] in their midst forevermore. 27) My tabernacle also shall

be with them; ...” **Verse 28** – “The nations [the Gentile nations] also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when *My sanctuary* is in their midst forevermore.”

Leviticus chapter 26 – I’m skipping over some, there’s so many of these verses! **The Bible is simply peppered with these statements that GOD WILL LIVE ON THE EARTH!** And yet, our friends and neighbors think that God will always live far off in Heaven and that someday we’re desperately trying to get *there*. **Leviticus chapter 26, verse 11** – “I will set My tabernacle among you, ...” – way back here in the writings of Moses this statement was made! This truth was known! **Verse 12** – “I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.” – that covenant relationship which God has always desired and eventually He will attain!

Psalms chapter 46, verse 4 – “There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. **5)** God is in the midst of her, ... **7)** The LORD of hosts is with us; ... **11)** The LORD of hosts is with us; ...”

Psalms chapter 47, Psalms 48 – talks about it! First few verses of **Psalms 50** talks about it. **Psalms chapter 132, verse 12** – “If your [children] will keep My covenant And My testimony which I shall teach them, Their [children] also shall sit upon [David’s] throne forevermore.”

Verse 13 – “For the LORD has chosen Zion [New Jerusalem]; He has desired it for His dwelling place: **14)** ‘This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.’” – how does it get anymore plain than *this*!? Verse after verse!

Then you turn to **Matthew chapter 1, verse 23**, where early on we are told, ‘*For behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,*’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’”

And that’s literally what God – Jesus Christ is going to do! He is going to be *with* human beings and His resurrected saints ON THIS EARTH!

Isaiah chapter 7, verse 14 – “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” – which is ‘God with us.’ Isaiah chapter 8 talks about the same thing! *Immanuel*. In **Verse 18, of Isaiah 8** – “...From the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion.” Immanuel – ‘God with us.’ Living in Jerusalem!

I mentioned **Matthew chapter 6, verse 10** – “**Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done On EARTH as it is in Heaven.**”

Revelation chapter 1, verse 5 – “and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the Ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ...” – such a beautiful statement, which often we read at Passover time! **Verse 6** – “and [He has made, or He will make of us] kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. **7)** Behold, He is coming with clouds, and **EVERY EYE WILL SEE HIM,** ...” – now, doesn’t that put a, sort-a, kink in the ol’ “secret rapture” – nobody’s gonna know

when Jesus returns! Well, if you wanna believe your “holy” man – human being – believe *that*, but, if you wanna believe the Bible, notice what it says here – “and every eye shall see Him.” He goes on to say, “even they who pierced Him.” – and I think that’s a reference to the resurrected “Holy” Roman Empire! The modern-day manifestation of that government, which we know will be growing up within the heartland of Europe – and probably even now in the backrooms and the smoke-filled rooms where the secret discussions are taking place. That is even now is being planned, plotted, and thought about. And has been mentioned so often here lately, the impending economic downfall of Europe. And Europe is going to crumble bit by bit, or a big crash. And, somewhere, deep down, you *know* the German people – you know the historic record. At some point they’re going to stand-up and say, “Enough of this confusion! We are going to find somebody who can straighten this out! We’re going to find a ‘strong-man.’ Someone who can bring order to our society.” And that’s when things really get interesting! Continuing, “And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. ...”

Revelation chapter 5, verse 10 – “And [He will make us] kings and priests to our God; ...” – that’s our future role, to be kings – rulers. So, maybe ruler over three cities, or ruler over five cities, or ruler over ten cities. But, in administrative positions. And it says, notice the next part – “And we shall reign ON THE EARTH.” – I do not know how Billy Graham tackled *that* verse!? I don’t know how he wiggled around it, other than a magic marker. “We’ll just mark that one out, we’ll just not talk about *that* one!”

Revelation chapter 15, verse 4 – “Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested.” – and they will worship before Him IN JERUSALEM! ‘His feet shall stand that day on the Mount of Olives.’

Revelation chapter 20, verse 4 – “And I saw thrones, and they say on them, and judgment was committed to them. ... And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” – so, not only is Jesus Christ reigning on the Earth, the resurrected saints are living on the Earth!

Revelation chapter 21, verse 2 – “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3)** And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ...” – and HEAR THIS! Now many say, “Well, I don’t believe all that Old Testament stuff!” You know, your Baptist friends, your Methodist friends, but, how do they get away from *this* one!? NEW TESTAMENT – “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.” Verse 22 – “But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. **23)** The city had no need of the Sun or of the Moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. **24)** And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth [residences of the earth] bring their glory and honor into it.”

Revelation chapter 22, verse 3 – “And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. **4)** They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

Well, in **John chapter 14** – now, you often hear this at a funeral. A Protestant funeral. And they *like* the first few lines – **Verse 1** – “**Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.** **2)** **In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**” – and they normally shut their Bible right then. But **Verse 3**, which is what He’s getting to – “**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I AM, there you may be also.**” – and WHERE is He!? He’s ON THE EARTH! Remember Acts chapter 1, the angelic messenger says, ‘You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into the heavens? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go up to Heaven.’ Just as plain as day! He’s coming back to the Earth, His residence is on the Earth, He’s gonna live on the Earth for all eternity and we’re gonna be with Him! It’s just amazing!

Did the ancient Jews believe in life after death?

Another factor to consider, when asking the question about ‘why wasn’t Jesus more blunt and direct.’ Communicating what He thought about topics such as the immortality of the soul, “going off to Heaven,” or “going off to Hell” – I don’t know if you’ve thought of it this way, but, consider *this*. No one in the society and the culture in which He lived was even slightly imbued with any of those ideas. The Jewish people did not believe in an afterlife. Except the Pharisees had some vague notion of a resurrection. The Sadducees believed in no resurrection. You go back and read some of the pieces on the computer about the ancient Hebrew beliefs, and this great afterlife idea was a vague concept. They weren’t clued into the afterlife, because they never were clued into Jesus Christ! And if you don’t understand Jesus Christ, you don’t understand eternal life. Or, how to get there, or what it’s all about. These ideas of immortality of the soul, “going to Heaven,” “going to Hell,” they simply did not exist in that culture. There was no need for Jesus to talk about them – back then – because nobody of His day believed them or even remotely curious about them! And in the same vein, you cannot find instances in the Bible – in the “gospel” accounts – when Jesus spoke out against Sunday worship. Wouldn’t it be easier to deal with your neighbors, friends, if you could turn to Matthew chapter 12 or whatever, and it says, “You will not go to church on Sunday! Except on Pentecost!” Boy, you could just highlight it in red and say, “Look!” There is no such verse. Jesus didn’t talk about Sunday worship! Why!? Because everyone in His culture *knew* when the Sabbath was! It wasn’t even worth discussing, it was so plain and obvious! Everyone knew it! Well, what about Christmas!? You don’t see in the Bible Jesus saying, “Now, be sure that you do not celebrate Christmas sometime off in the future!” Well, there’s no idea of Christmas, or Easter (or *Ishtar*) in the Jewish culture! It simply did not exist! There was no reason for Him to talk about them, because there was simply no confusion. And, you can also apply this – extending it just a bit – to unclean meat. I have heard some good ol’ boys, back in the South tell me, “Well if God didn’t want us to eat pork, Jesus would have told us!”

And they added, “Well, there’s nothing in the gospel accounts about Jesus saying, ‘Don’t eat pork.’!” Or, as I like to say, “Pig meat.” That gets some of my family members upset at times. But somehow, “Pork,” or “Ham,” sounds better!? But He didn’t rail about eating pigs, or oysters, or lobsters, because no one in that culture even thought about doing it! It wasn’t relevant. The same thing could be said about homosexual “marriage.” Everyone in *that* culture knew that marriage was an institution which had been implemented by God and it was subject to His rules. There was no... even curiosity about coming up with “same-sex marriage.” As now our previous esteemed leader has done! Or, illegal drugs, you don’t see Jesus ranting and raving about illegal drugs, or pornography, or so many of the other issues that seem to keep popping up in our culture and in our news. Just because Jesus Christ did not openly speak out against these issues, it cannot be argued that He approved or in some way He was in favor of these ideas. A person cannot take the absence of comments by Jesus Christ as proof or validation that He approved some of these suggested topics. Just because He did not speak against them does not mean He approved them! And yet, there are people who use that reasoning. I’ve run across them, who say, “Well, Jesus didn’t speak against it!” Yeah, He didn’t have to. It was so plain, so obvious. It really gets back to what Paul said in **1st Corinthians chapter 2**, that something we know “because they are spiritually discerned.” And it is also vitally important for a student of the Bible to encompass the totality of what the entire Bible has to say about any given subject. It’s the principle from Isaiah of ‘line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little there a little.’

Why don’t more people believe God!?

I’ve told the story before, how my good friend, Michael Partridge, who lives back in Evansville – when I had moved back from Arizona and I was now living in Kentucky. One evening I went over to see Mike and Annie in Evansville, and we went to a very nice Mexican food restaurant. As we finished eating Annie says, “O’ Washington Square Mall is right across the street, let’s go over there and walk and get some exercise!” And I thought, “Well, alright, I’m not against that.” So we drove over to Washington Square Mall, at which point Mike and I sat down and Annie took off walking. And about forty-five minutes later or an hour later, Annie came back with three or four shopping bags on her arms. And I thought, “Aha! Now I know what it means when we walk for exercise! I understand the lingo now!” And she gets irritated every time I tell that story, but I love the story! Anyway, as she was wandering off to the stores and shops, Michael became very frustrated and he said, “Why don’t more people believe God!?” And he added, “Why do we have a society which says, ‘In God We Trust,’ and yet most of the people around us just seemingly don’t care what the Bible says or God says!? Or, they don’t do what He says!?” And, Michael was really quite upset over that idea. And I said, “Mike, you gotta keep something in mind.” And we all, ever so often, we have to stop and go, “Mmmm, alright, alright, I get it!”

Well, this is what Jesus said in **Matthew chapter 13** – after He gave the parable of the Sower, He says in **Verse 9** – “**He who has ears to hear, let him hear!**” **10**) And the disciples came and said to Him, ‘Why do You speak to them [unto the masses; as it says

in verse 2 – ‘the great multitude’] in parables [in puzzles, in conundrums, in dark sayings that they cannot fully understand]?’ **11)** He answered and said to them, ‘**Because it has been given to you ...**’” – it is given unto people who have been called by God, and that’s not everyone in this age. And I know that the people outside of our organization don’t understand that. I know that my Baptist friends and my Catholic friends and my Methodist friends probably presume, “Well, I’ve been called,” although I actually don’t think *they think* about that idea. But they don’t know the truth of God. And He said, “**it has been given unto you [the true disciples] to know the mysteries of the Kingdom [from] Heaven, but to them [to the ‘great multitude’] it has not been given.**” He says in **Verse 13** – “**Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14)** And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: *‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; 15)* *For the hearts of this people have grown dull [or hardened]. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and [should be converted], So that I should heal them.*” He says in **Verse 16** – “**But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17)** **for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not [or were not allowed to] see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.**” – So, every day I think that *we* at some point in the day should be thankful to God – sincerely thankful – that *we*, of a very small minority of all the people on the face of the earth – what [7.7 billion people](#) right now – who have actually been given this gift of God’s calling! And, the vast majority of mankind is simply in “spiritual ignorance.” Again, that word ignorance is not a dirty word, it just means, they do not know, they do not understand. And in this present era of time, they will remain in ignorance until God calls them. But, in doing so – this is the great blessing – He has kept them safe and protected from the danger and the potential threat of eternal death. Because had they – in mass – been shown the truth of God and then they openly reject it without any respect to the sacrifice of Christ, they would be in danger of the second death, as the Book of Revelation says. But now, most of our friends, relatives, loved ones, and neighbors, and co-workers, and people that we know, they’re safe. They don’t know the truth of God, but they’re not in danger of ‘the Judgment.’ And in that sense it was a very kind and merciful thing. And it takes a certain amount of spiritual understanding to get that processed. Well, notice in **Matthew chapter 20, verse 16 and Matthew chapter 22, verse 14** – we’ve heard this many times – “**...’For many are called, but few chosen.**” – of all the people on the face of the earth, very very few have actually been chosen by God to receive His truth and His Spirit, and have their names written in the Book of Life! He said in **Mark chapter 13, verse 20** – “**...’but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, ...**” – the elect, the selected of God are indeed handpicked by God the Father. As Jesus said, “**No man can come to me except he be drawn by the Father.**” *

Mr. Garrett refined the understanding of Christ’s meaning of ‘the elect’ (through the graciousness of Jesus Christ and God the Father) in such text’s as [“Notes Concerning the Day of Atonement Series – Part 4,](#) pages 3-4.

Conclusion

The image and the specter of existing for all eternity in a state of excruciating agony and suffering in the depths of Hell has vexed and tormented millions and billions of people for hundreds of years. As Paul said in **Hebrews chapter 2, verse 15** – people, who through the fear of death, where all of their lifetime subject to bondage – the bondage of fear. It's a terrible thing to be held in bondage by fear. But, in **1st John chapter 4, verse 18** – “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” – and I'm ashamed to state that, in my opinion, there are many individuals who came from the Worldwide Church of God who use fear to control their people. And it's wrong! It's absolutely wrong!

Turn to **2nd Timothy chapter 1, verse 1** – very encouraging words; This is the Truth of God! - “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, **according to the promise of life** which is in Christ Jesus, **2**) To Timothy, a beloved son:” – and then he says in **Verse 6** – “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on my hands.” – apparently Paul was the one who laid hands on Timothy. **Verse 7** – “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of *power* ...” – and that word is *dynamis* – the power of God's Spirit. “and of love and of a sound mind.” And then he says in **Verse 9** – Jesus Christ “who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before [the world] began, 10) but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through [the Words of Jesus Christ – the Words of the gospel, the Words of the Bible].”

We all have a wonderful future, if we hang on to Jesus Christ! The people of the world have these horrible ideas about life and death, and their loved ones suffering for all eternity or they fear that they might be there. And yet, that's not the truth of the Bible – the truth of the Bible is God will allow most of us to live for all eternity! We, who have been called of God, have this great truth! Be thankful every day that you know that truth. And be appreciative every day that someday you will hear the voice of Jesus Christ calling you either out of life or death into eternal life.



We invite you to come watch, “Subscribe,” learn, and enjoy many of Mr. Michael C. Garrett’s sermons at [Leonard Johnson’s YouTube channel](#) dedicated to God and the brethren at [Owensboro Church of Jesus Christ](#)!

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